

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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R 232212Z APR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USSAGE

CINCPAC

COGARD

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC,US

SUBJECT:APRIL 23 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. AMBASSADOR MARTIN TELLS CDN'S KEYES BEECH THAT HE WILL RETURN TO WASHINGTON THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY FOR "CONSULTATIONS" AND FULLY EXPECTS TO RETURN TO POST. MARTIN SAYS THAT HE IS RETURNING WITH SINGLE AIM, TO TELL AMERICAN PEOPLE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT VN, UNCLASSIFIED

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SINCE HE DEEPLY BELIEVES THAT WHEN US PEOPLE AND CONGRESS

HAVE WHOLE TRUTH, THEIR DECISIONS ARE "ALMOST ALWAYS CORRECT." HE DISMISSES AS "NONSENSE" REPORTS THAT HE IS BEING RECALLED, STATES THAT HE HAS BEEN SCHEDULED TO RETURN AT ANY TIME SINCE FEB. BUT FELT HE SHOULD REMAIN UNTIL CLEAR WHETHER COMMUNISTS WOULD LAUNCH DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE. AMB. "WRYLY" CONCEDES THAT HE IS A "HOT PROPERTY", EXPECTS TO BE MUCH IN DEMAND FOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN US. MARTIN HAD MAINTAINED LOW PUBLIC PROFILE FOR OVER 30 YEARS IN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE, SAYS WAS INSPIRED TO "GO PUBLIC" BY SOLZHENITSYN PASSAGE ON TRUTH. BEECH QUOTES "ANOTHER SOURCE" THAT MARTIN WAS ORDERED BACK TO WASHINGTON MARCH 17 BUT REFUSED TO GO BECAUSE IT WOULD APPEAR THAT RETURN WAS TO "EXPLAIN HIMSELF" AFTER A "LENGTHY VERBAL BOUT" WITH NYT. SAME SOURCE SAYS AMB. "RELUCTANTLY" AGREED

TO GO TO SAIGON FOR ONE YEAR AT SECSTATE'S REQUEST, BUT "NOW THAT HE'S IN A FIGHT HE MAY EXTEND HIS TOUR" (WP).

2. MARKHAM (NYT) FROM DUC HUE DESCRIBES SIEGE AS ONE POCKET OF VIOLENCE IN "FLAT, UNLOVELY" HAU NGHIA PROVINCE WHERE FRENCH AND US FOUGHT AND NOW GVN FIGHTS. PROVINCE RUNS FROM SAIGON OUTSKIRTS TO KHMER BORDER; ARVN CONDUCTS SWEEPS TO KEEP CONTROL OF VITAL ROUTE 1, WHILE COMMUNISTS POUND OUTPOSTS AND TRY TO "SEEP DOWN" TOWARD ROAD. MANY HAMLETS AND VILLAGES HAVE TRADITION OF SYMPATHY FOR "OTHER SIDE", AND VILLAGERS DISCUSS POLITICAL AND MIL MATTERS IN "OPAQUE, DIPLOMATIC" LANGUAGE APPARENTLY DEVOID OF OPINION. C-F VIOLATIONS COMMON, GUERRILLAS RECENTLY ASSASSINATED DEFECTOR IN TRUNG LAP VILLAGE. PROVINCE OFFICIALS SPEAK OF RECENT WAVE OF TERRORISM, INCLUDING TWO GRENADE INCIDENTS THAT KILLED 15, BUT LOCAL PEOPLE SAY PERSONAL ANIMOSITY CAUSED ONE OF THE INCIDENTS.

3. GVN COMMAND REPORTS 82 NVA AND NLF KILLED SUNDAY IN BATTLES IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, DELTA AND IN AREA 40 MILES EAST OF SAIGON (CSM). GVN INFO MINISTER NHA SAYS NVN PUSHING MIL THREAT CLOSER TO SAIGON TO UNCLASSIFIED

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STRENGTHEN ITS HAND FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINA THAT IT HOPES TO HAVE CONVENED; STATES GVN WOULD NEVER ENTER NEGOTIATIONS FOR "SECOND PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT." SVN REJECTS NVN AND VC DEMANDS THAT IT RESUME POLITICAL TALKS IN PARIS. GVN SAYS ITS TROOPS RETOOK FIREBASE 711 IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS (WP).

4. CDN'S LARRY GREEN IN SAIGON REPORTS THAT GVN PINS HOPES FOR SURVIVAL NOT ON MIL VICTORY OR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, BUT ON OIL. INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES BOUGHT EXPLORATION RIGHTS, SEEK TO BUY MORE AND THINK CHANCES OF FINDING OIL ARE GOOD. GREEN SEES LAST WINTER'S PARACELS' BATTLE AS PROBABLY OIL-INSPIRED. FIRST OFFSHORE DRILLING TO BEGIN NEXT FALL BY SHELL, AND REPORTS CIRCULATING IN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY INDICATE THAT ANOTHER COMPANY WILL BEGIN DRILLING LATER THIS YEAR. ECONOMISTS AND DIPLOMATS CAUTION THAT EVEN IF FOUND, OIL WOULD NOT BRING IMMEDIATE END TO SVN PROBLEMS SINCE COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE 3-4 YEARS. BUT WESTERN ECONOMIST THINKS DISCOVERY WOULD EASE PRESSURE ON FALTERING ECONOMY, "ALMOST INSTANTLY" RAISE SVN'S INTERNATIONAL CREDIT RATING, AND PROMPT OTHER COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE "LARGE DOSES" OF ECON AID (NY POST 4/22).

5. AP'S DENIS GRAY IN SAIGON SEES VERY LITTLE LIGHT AT THE END OF INDOCHINA'S ECON TUNNEL, WITH ALMOST TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON MORE US DOLLARS FOR YEARS TO COME. SVN, CAMBODIA AND LAOS "NEARLY IMPOTENT" IN ECON QUAGMIRE BROUGHT BY YEARS OF WARFARE. ECON EXPERT SAYS ONLY HOPE IS INCREASING PRODUCTION, BUT THIS IS DIFFICULT IN BATTLE ZONES. US FOOTS LONG AND VARIED BILL, WITH THIS YEAR'S AID AT ABOUT THREE BILLION DOLS, WITH RATIO 3-TO-1 IN FAVOR OF GUNS OVER BUTTER, AND SVN GETTING LION'S SHARE. IN FY 75, US SUPPORT FOR INDOCHINA EXPECTED TO RISE TO 3.5 BILLION. INFLATION RAMPANT IN ALL THESE COUNTRIES AND ALL-OUT WAR IN CAMBODIA, "BLOODY PEACE" IN VN AND "UNCERTAIN COALITION" IN LAOS FRIGHTEN AWAY FOREIGN INVESTORS. BUT WITH REAL PEACE CAMBODIA AND SVN COULD AGAIN BECOME BIG EXPORTERS
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OF RICE AND OTHER PRODUCTS, UNTAPPED OIL RESERVES BELIEVED OFFSHORE, AND ALL THREE COUNTRIES HAVE "CONSIDERABLE TOURIST APPEAL" (NY POST 4/22).

6. BECKER (WP) FROM PP REPORTS THAT KHIEU SAMPHAN'S TOUR THROUGH ASIA, EUROPE AND AFRICA IS VIEWED BY TOP GKR OFFICIALS AS PLOY TO GET GKR UN SEAT. MFA PRESS OFFICER SAYS GKR BELIEVES THAT "KHMER ROUGE" ARE ATTEMPTING TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE TO UNSEAT GKR. MFA SOURCES SAY THAT FM KEUKY LIM LEFT FOR NY QUIETLY ON UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO ASSESS UN MOOD AND PREVENT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE GKR FROM UN ENERGY COMMISSION THIS SESSION. WHILE SKEPTICAL OF TRUE IDENTITY, PP LEADERS ACCEPT SAMPHAN AS KR LEADER INSIDE CAMBODIA, A "TITLE" NOT ACCORDED IN THE PAST, ESPECIALLY SIHANOUK.

OFFICIAL PP PRESS NOTICEABLY SILENT IN SAMPHAN TOUR, THOUGH LONG BORET MENTIONED TRIP AS SIGNIFICANT BUT WARNED THAT HE SAW NO PEACE NEGOTIATIONS COMING FROM IT. SAMPHAN IS ONE OF THREE "PHANTOMS", POPULAR FORMER MINISTERS REPORTEDLY EXECUTED BY SIHANOUK, AND PP STILL NOT CONVINCED THAT PERSON ON TOUR IS NOT A FAKE. FOREIGN OFFICIALS GROW WEARY OF CAMBODIAN DEBATE OVER SAMPHAN. ONE DIPLOMAT SEES TREMENDOUS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TOUR GOING OVER PEOPLE'S HEADS, SINCE THIS IS FIRST TIME THAT KR HAVE PRESENTED LEADER IN PEKING, GAINING PRESTIGE AND POSSIBLY ARMS WHILE PP SQUABBLES OVER HIS IDENTITY.

7. OVER 700 FANK TROOPS STILL MIA AFTER REBEL ASSAULT ON KOMPONG LUONG; 1500 FIGHT WAY TO GKR CAM
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